



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20240

IN REPLY REFER TO:

DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY NOTIFICATION

National Register of Historic Places
National Park Service

Name of Property: Mitchell River Bridge
Location: Barnstable County

State: MA

Request submitted by: Lucy Garliauskas, Division Administrator, US Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration.

Date received: 9/07/2010 Additional information received 9/09/2010

Opinion of the State Historic Preservation Officer:

☐ Eligible ☒ Not Eligible ☐ No Response ☐ Need More Information

Comments:

The Secretary of the Interior has determined that this property is:

☒ Eligible ☐ Not Eligible
Applicable criteria: A and C

Comment:

See attached for detailed comment


Keeper of the National Register

Date: 10-1-2010



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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Name of Property: Mitchell River Bridge

Location: Chatham, Barnstable County, Massachusetts

The Mitchell River Bridge, in Chatham, Massachusetts, is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its association with local transportation history and under Criterion C as a rare surviving example of a structure embodying the distinctive characteristics of a once-common method of construction. The Mitchell River Bridge, constructed in 1980 atop the pilings of an earlier bridge, is one of a continuous line of wooden drawbridges that have spanned this river crossing for over 150 years. It is the last remaining single-leaf wooden drawbridge in Massachusetts (and perhaps in the entire United States), and as such, is of exceptional significance.

The importance of a wooden drawbridge over the Mitchell River has long been recognized by the residents of Chatham, Massachusetts. The records show that over the years, residents have insisted that when authorities proposed alterations to the Mitchell River Bridge that priority was to be given to in kind replacement of its materials, and retention of its simple design, form and function as a wooden drawbridge. The three successive wooden drawbridges over the Mitchell River (1858, 1925, and 1980) have been depicted through the decades in drawings, paintings, postcards and photographs. The Chatham Historical Commission, the Friends of the Mitchell River Wooden Drawbridge and others have repeatedly affirmed that they consider the bridge to be historically significant, and that the simple, yet distinctive, configuration of the bridge and its presence on the landscape form an exceptionally important part of the community's historic identity.

Carol D. Shull
Interim Keeper
National Register of Historic Places
October 1, 2010